

**Notice of Allowability**

Application No.

10/775,266

Examiner

Leith A. Al-Nazer

Applicant(s)

SADWICK ET AL.

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**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--**

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to amendment filed on 13 January 2006.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,2,4 and 6-24.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

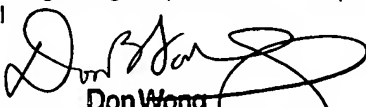
\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.  
**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
7. ☐ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

  
Don Wong  
Supervisory Patent Examiner  
Technology Center 2800

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Drawings***

1. The formal drawings received on 13 January 2006 are acceptable.

### ***Allowable Subject Matter***

2. Claims 1, 2, 4, and 6-24 are allowed.

3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The prior art of record fails to teach or suggest one or more of the limitations found in independent claims 1, 2, and 4. U.S. Patent No. 3,322,996 to Schrager and U.S. Patent No. 3,508,108 to Salisbury both teach similar systems to that of the present application. However, with respect to independent claim 1, Schrager and Salisbury, as well as the other prior art of record, fail to teach or suggest a hinge joint being formed parallel to the rails of the ladder-like structures by folding 180° along a hinge line separating the ladder-like structures. With respect to independent claim 2, the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest a pair of ladder-like structures positioned in register with one another to form a tunnel therebetween wherein the structures are integral with one another by folding 180° along a hinge joint axis parallel to the longitudinal axis of the tunnel. With respect to independent claim 4, the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the combination of etching the unmasked portions to remove precisely the unmasked portions of the sheet material to result in a ladder-like structure with precisely

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spaced rungs; forming the etched sheet along its longitudinal axis to recess the rung members from the plane of the sheet material; and folding the etched sheet 180° along a hinge line onto itself to form the ladder-type device. Therefore, independent claims 1, 2, and 4, as well as all respective dependent claims, are allowable over the prior art of record.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

### ***Communication Information***


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Leith A. Al-Nazer whose telephone number is 571-272-1938. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 7:30-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Don Wong can be reached on 571-272-1834. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

LA

  
Don Wong  
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